

PATENT

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-8 (Cancelled)

9. (Previously Presented) A method comprising:
- receiving a plurality of information bits, the plurality of information bits containing different classes of information bits;
 - determining an outer quality metric in accordance with the plurality of information bits and an inner quality metric in accordance with at least one group of information bits of a particular class, wherein the outer quality metric and the inner quality metric are determined independently; and
 - forming a frame comprising the plurality of information bits, the outer quality metric, and the inner quality metric, the outer quality metric being used for protection of the plurality of information bits and the inner quality metric being used for protection of the at least one group of information bits of the particular class.
10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 9 wherein the outer quality metric comprises a cyclic redundancy check (CRC).
11. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 9 wherein the outer quality metric comprises a parity bit.
12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 9 wherein the inner quality metric comprises a cyclic redundancy check (CRC).
13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 9 wherein the inner quality metric comprises a parity bit.
14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 9 further comprising:
- transmitting the frame to a destination;

Attorney Docket No.: 000320

Customer No.: 23696

PATENT

receiving the frame at the destination; and
determining whether the frame has been correctly received based on the outer quality metric contained in the frame.

15. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14 further comprising:
if the frame has not been received correctly, determining whether the at least one group of information bits has been received correctly based on the inner quality metric contained in the frame; and
recovering the at least one group of information bits if the inner quality metric indicates that the at least one group of information bits has been received correctly.

Claims 16-34 (Cancelled)

35. (New) A method comprising:
receiving a plurality of information bits, the plurality of information bits containing different classes of information bits;
determining an outer quality metric in accordance with the plurality of information bits and an inner quality metric in accordance with at least one group of information bits of a particular class, wherein the outer quality metric and the inner quality metric are determined independently, and further wherein the inner quality metric is determined subsequent to the determination of the outer quality metric; and
forming a frame comprising the plurality of information bits, the outer quality metric, and the inner quality metric, the outer quality metric being used for protection of the plurality of information bits and the inner quality metric being used for protection of the at least one group of information bits of the particular class